

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 R

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DRAFTED BY EA/VN:RHWENZEL:AOA

APPROVED BY EA:M. STEARNS

S/S-O K. KURZE

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R 260005Z JAN 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO CINCPAC

S E C R E T STATE 012653

EXDIS, CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FOL REPEAT STATE 012653 SENT ACTION SAIGON INFO PEKING HONG
KONG TAIPEI JAN 19

QTE

S E C R E T STATE 012653

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MOPS, VS, CH, PF

SUBJECT: GVN/PRC DISPUTE IN PARACELS

REF: SAIGON 857 AND TOSEC 246 (STATE 012641)

1. PRESS HERE IS BEGINNING TO DEPICT PARACEL DISPUTE AS
SIGNIFICANT CLASH BETWEEN GVN AND PRC NAVAL FORCES. FOR
OBVIOUS REASONS WE WOULD LIKE TO COOL SITUATION BEFORE IT
LEADS TO ANYTHING MORE SERIOUS THAN SKIRMISHING OF GUNBOATS.
IN PARTICULAR WE WISH TO AVOID GVN/PRC CONFRONTATION WHICH
WOULD LEAD, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, TO MORE ACTIVE PRC
SUPPORT FOR DRV (WHICH HAS APPARENTLY REMAINED SILENT ON
SUBJECT OF PARACELS SO FAR). WE HAVE AT THIS STAGE NO POSI-
SECRET

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TION ON QUESTION OF WHICH SIDE HAS BETTER CLAIM TO
SOVEREIGNTY OVER ISLANDS. LOS CONFERENCE IN JUNE MAY PRO-
VIDE SOME GUIDELINES ALONG WHICH CONFLICTING CLAIMS CAN BE
PEACEFULLY ADJUDICATED.

2. ACCORDINGLY, OUR PRINCIPAL INTEREST IS TO BRING ABOUT AN
END TO THE LIMITED HOSTILITIES THAT HAVE BEEN TAKING PLACE,
DEESCALATE THE RHETORIC AND ENCOURAGE BOTH SIDES TO RESERVE
THEIR LEGAL POSITIONS UNTIL THEY CAN BE WEIGHED IN AN
APPROPRIATE FORUM.

3. REQUEST, THEREFORE, THAT YOU DISCUSS SITUATION WITH
THIEU OR BAC, POINTING OUT THAT IT IS NEITHER IN GVN
INTERESTS NOR IN OURS TO SEE CONFLICT OVER PARACELS
EXACERBATED. WE ARE ESPECIALLY ANXIOUS TO AVOID ACTIONS,
WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO LESS RATIONAL PRC ROLE IN VN CONFLICT.
WE DO NOT SUGGEST THAT GVN TAKE ACTIONS PREJUDICIAL TO
THEIR LEGAL POSITION ON SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PARACELS OR
FAIL TO DEFEND THEMSELVES, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT FURTHER
NAVAL CLASHES SHOULD, IF POSSIBLE, BE AVOIDED AND GVN
SHOULD TAKE LEAD IN SEEKING PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT-WHETHER
AT LOS CONFERENCE, HAGUE COURT OR UN.

4. WE ASSUME MEANWHILE YOU ARE TAKING ALL FEASIBLE STEPS
TO SECURE GVN ASSISTANCE IN EXTRACTION OF US OFFICIAL FROM
PARACELS AND WE NEED REPORT SOONEST ON CIRCUMSTANCES OF
HIS PRESENCE THERE AT THIS MOST UNPROFITIOUS OF MOMENTS.
RUSH

UNQTE
KISSINGER

SECRET

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